

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH DC REFORMER

1. SUMMARY. A LEADING YOUNG DC REFORMER GAVE HIS VIEWS ON NEAR-TERM POLITICAL SITUATION TO EMBOFF APRIL 28. SOURCE SAW EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN JUNE AS ALMOST INEVITABLE. LOCKHEAD SCANDAL VIEWED AS HIGHLY DAMAGING TO DC ELECTORAL PROSPECTS AND SOURCE URGED THAT EFFORT BE MADE EITHER TO IDENTIFY IMMEDIATELY ITALIAN POLITICIAN(S) INVOLVED OR PUSH ISSUE TO BACK BURNER UNTIL AFTER EXPECTED JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. SOURCE PREDICTED ELECTION CAMPAIGN POLARIZING VOTERS AROUND ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANTI-SCANDAL, PRO-REFORM THEMES AND VIEWED OUTCOME AS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON ATTITUDES OF PRESS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY. INDICATIONS CITED THAT CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND AGNELLI BOTH CONSIDERING LESS ANTI-DC STANCE DURING CAMPAIGN. POST ELECTION SCENARIOS ENVISAGED WERE LEFTIST MAJORITY GOVERNMENT JOINED BY BREAK-AWAY GROUPS FROM DC OR DC-SOCIALIST ALLIANCE WITH INCREASED

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COMMUNIST CONSULTATIVE ROLE IN POLICY MAKING. END SUMMARY.

2. IN APRIL 28 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, LEADING YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY REFORMER DISCUSSED PROSPECTS FOR HIS PARTY IN NEAR TERM AND FOLLOWING EXPECTED JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

3. PROSPECTS FOR GOVERNMENT CRISIS - ALTHOUGH IN FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS TO AVOID EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, SOURCE TERMED THEM ALMOST INEVITABLE. HE PREDICTED THAT MORO WILL RESIGN FRIDAY AND THAT PRESIDENT LEONE WILL THEN PROCEED WITHIN FEW DAYS TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT. ELECTIONS WOULD THEN TAKE PLACE ON JUNE 20-21. SOURCE PREDICTED THAT LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SICILY AND SEVERAL IMPORTANT CITIES INCLUDING ROME WOULD BE HELD CONCURRENTLY.

4. LOCKHEED SCANDAL - SOURCE SAID THAT LOCKHEED SCANDAL HAD DONE GRAVE HARM TO DC ELECTORAL CHANCES. IF SCANDAL CONTINUES TO FLAME AND IF OTHER SCANDALS ARE ADDED DURING COURSE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN, DC MAY LOSE BADLY. TO EXTENT USG HAS POWER TO DO SO, SOURCE HOPED THAT LOCKHEED MATTER (IDENTITY OF "ANTELOPE COBBLER") CAN EITHER BE CLARIFIED WITHIN NEXT WEEK OR SO OR PUT ON BACK BURNER UNTIL AFTER JUNE 20 ELECTIONS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED FERVENT HOPE THAT NO NEW US-ORIGIN SCANDALS WOULD CROP UP DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

5. DC REFORM. DC LOCAL LEADERSHIP IS STILL PRESSING FOR REFORM IN TERMS OF "NEW FACES" TO BE PRESENTED IN EVENT OF EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. SOURCE BELIEVES THAT PROPOSALS WILL BE MADE TO ALLOW LOCAL (REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL) DC ORGANIZATIONS A FREE HAND IN DRAWING UP CANDIDATE LISTS. EXISTING SITUATION PERMITS NATIONAL DIRECTORATE TO ADD CANDIDATES TO LOCALLY DRAWN UP LISTS. SOURCE EXPLAINED THAT DIRECTORATE POWER TRADITIONALLY USED TO REINSERT OLD GUARD LEADERS OR FAVORITES LEFT OFF LOCALLY PREPARED LISTS. SOURCE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE SEES NO SIGN THAT OLD GUARD LEADERSHIP IN DIRECTORATE WOULD APPROVE SUCH A CHANGE IN EXISTING PRACTICE.

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6. DC ELECTORAL PROSPECTS. SOURCE STATED THAT HE HAS HOPES THAT DC COULD BETTER JUNE 15 (1975) LEVELS IN EVENT OF EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. MAIN CAMPAIGN ISSUES, HE PREDICTED, WILL BE "FEAR OF COMMUNISM" ON ONE HAND AND "MORALITY AND REFORM" ON THE OTHER. IF NO FURTHER SCANDALS ERUPT AND THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR DIES DOWN, THE "FEAR OF COMMUNISM" THEME MIGHT PREVAIL SINCE A GROWING NUMBER OF VOTERS ARE GETTING INCREASINGLY

CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF PCI GAINING POWER.

7. AS EVIDENCE OF THIS CONCERN, SOURCE STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY A LEADING COLUMNIST FOR CORRIERE DELLA SERA (MILAN, LEFT OF CENTER DAILY) THAT HIS PAPER WOULD BE INCLINED TO GIVE DC A HAND IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IF PARTY COULD GIVE THEM SOME "VALID EXCUSE" FOR DOING SO (VIA INTERNAL REFORM). SOURCE ALSO STATED THAT A CONFINDUSTRIA LEADER HAD TOLD HIM THAT GIOVANNI AGNELLI HAD RECENTLY TOLD RESTRICTED GATHERING OF CONFINDUSTRIA EXECUTIVES THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO ASSIST THE DC IN EVENT OF EARLY ELECTIONS.

8. POST ELECTION SCENARIOS. SOURCE SAW TWO BASIC POSSIBLE SCENARIOS: A LEFT WING MAJORITY OR A NEW DC-PSI GOVERNMENT. HE EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY THAT DC WOULD AGREE TO HISTORIC COMPROMISE IN TERMS OF ADMITTING PCI TO GOVERNMENT.

9. IN EVENT COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS GAIN A MAJORITY, SOURCE PREDICTED THAT EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO SPLIT DC. HE STATED THAT A FEW DC LEADERS LIKE TAVIANI, SOME MOROTEI, GALLONI, GRANELLI, CABRAS AND FRACANZANI WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO GO ALONG, BUT THAT MAJORITY WOULD FAVOR GOING INTO OPPOSITION.

10. IF LEFT FAILS TO GET A MAJORITY AND DC HOLDS, SOURCE PREDICTED A NEW DC-PSI ALLIANCE. IN THIS EVENT, DC MIGHT POSSIBLY BE CONSTRAINED TO ACCEPT "PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD" WITH PCI OF TYPE IN EFFECT AT LOCAL LEVEL IN MANY AREAS. HOWEVER, HE HOPED THAT SOCIALISTS WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT LESS DANGEROUS FORMULA OF "CONSULTATION" WITH PCI ON MAJOR ISSUES.

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SOURCE URGED USG TO SEEK TO CONVINCE SOCIALISTS OF NEED TO WORK WITH THE DC AND AVOID DEMAND THAT PCI COME INTO GOVERNING MAJORITY.

11. INTERNAL COMMUNIST DIVISIONS. SOURCE STATES BELIEF THAT BERLINGUER NOT FULLY IN CONTROL OF PARTY AND THAT HE HAD "BEEN PUT IN MINORITY" ON POSSIBLE COMPROMISE WITH BC ON ABORTION ISSUE. HE SAID THAT PCI LEADERS LIKE TOROTORELLA AND AMENDOLA FAVOR TOUGHER LINE TOWARDS DC THAT BERLINGUER AND THAT LATTER WOULD BE PUSHED ASIDE IF PCI EVER CAME INTO POWER. VOLPE

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